Joining Trade Block with African Countries

1678. DR. K. MALAISAMY:
SHRI S.P.M. SYED KHAN:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether a bilateral agreement was signed for India to join the Trade Block with South Africa, Bostonia, Lesotho, Nambia and Switzerland, during the recent visit of Deputy President of South Africa;

(b) if so, what is the progress and effect of such agreement; and

(c) whether the agreement holds any modifications or improvments from our experience and if so, which are the areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

Revival package for plantation

1679. SHRI THENNALAG. BALAKRISHNA PILLAI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal for the revival package for plantations;

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A Special Purpose Tea Fund (SPTF) has already been created for replantation and rejuvenation of old and uneconomic tea plantations in the Country. The Scheme is to be implemented till the end of 11th Plan in the first phase with an estimated outlay of Rs. 567.10 crores to be provided by the Government. Under the scheme, the borrower is required -to contribute only 25% of the cost. 50% will be loan from SPTF and 25% subsidy from the Government. The estimated area to be taken up for